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New Zealand's Ajaz Patel celebrates his 10-wicket haul with teammates at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Saturday | AFP

Ajaz Patel: The Miracle Man

Ajaz Patel of New Zealand became only the third bowler in the history of Test cricket to take 10 wickets in an innings. The 33-year-old born in Mumbai, who was eight when his family migrated, achieved the feat at Wankhede Stadium in the same city. P13

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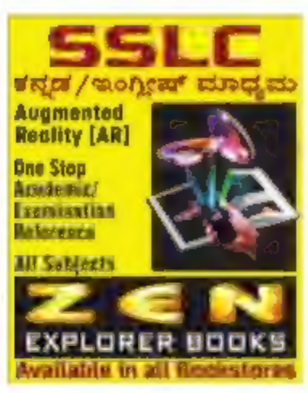


DREAM MUSEUM OF ART AND COINS P2

WITH THIS ISSUE
THE OMICRON EFFECT
PLUS 12 PAGES MAGAZINE

WAR OF WORDS

Modi takes potshots at 'divided' oppn

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Dehradun

AMID the war of words between the Congress and the Trinamool Congress over who will lead the alliance against the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday took potshots at the Opposition parties calling them a divided house. Without taking any names, Modi said, "Jo desh bhar me bikhar rahe hain, wo Uttarakhand ko nikhar nahi sakte hain (those who are divided across the country can't bring progress)."

After inaugurating projects worth ₹18,000 crore in poll-bound Uttarakhand, Modi claimed his government believes in bringing development projects for the benefit of all. Attacking his political opponents for distorting governance, he said, "Many parties are promoting a particular community, group or region. They think of those people only as a vote bank." P10

Don't sideline Cong: Sena warns Didi

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI
@ Mumbai

FAULT lines in the Opposition camp came to the fore again on Saturday as the Shiv Sena took a different line than that of West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee and NCP chief Sharad Pawar, saying there can be no Opposition alliance without the Congress.

In an editorial in its mouthpiece Saamna, the Sena said if "fascist forces" have to be defeated, all parties must come together and that can't happen without Congress' support. Sidelining the Congress will only help the BJP, it added.

As per the Sena, the Congress would be a game changer if it gets 100 seats in the Lok Sabha. After the Janata Party came to power in 1978, no one thought Indira Gandhi would bounce back but it happened, the editorial said.

Sena's comments come three days after Banerjee's high-profile Mumbai visit.

Tackle Covid surge: Centre to 6 states

TN, Kerala, K'taka, Odisha, J&K and Mizoram told to fight spread; Omicron cases rise to four

SUMI SUKANYA DUTTA @ New Delhi

WITH two more cases of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus emerging in India, the Centre on Saturday wrote to six states over rising cases in several districts. In a communication to Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Odisha, Mizoram and Jammu and Kashmir, Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan underlined the need to take necessary steps to control the spread of the infection and reduce fatalities. The states were asked to focus on the strategy of test, track, treat, vaccinate and Covid-appropriate behaviour to keep the situation under control.

"All states have been advised to undertake enhanced surveillance of international travellers, continued monitoring of emerging hotspots, prompt and comprehensive contact tracing of positive individuals and follow up of 14 days, sending all positive samples for genome sequencing quickly to INSACOG labs," Bhushan said.

On Saturday, a 72-year-old man who had just returned from Zimbabwe was confirmed to be infected with the Omicron variant in Gujarat's Jamnagar city. A 33-year-old man in Dombivali, Maharashtra, too, tested positive for the heavily mutated variant, taking the total number of Omicron cases in the country to four. Earlier, two Omicron cases were reported from Karnataka.

Health ministry sources said nearly 50 people in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Delhi are under the scanner for being infected with the variant even though most of them are showing only mild Covid-19 symptoms.

So far, nearly 675 cases of the Omicron variant, with nearly 50 mutations from the earliest version of SARS CoV 2, have been confirmed globally in about 38 countries, including India.

A security guard checks the vaccination certificate of a visitor at a mall in Bengaluru on Saturday | ASHISHKUMSHA HP

Districts of concern: Tumakuru, Mysuru, Dharwad, Bengaluru urban

JAB-O-METER
TAKE YOUR SHOT
Dec 03 66,58,055 doses
Dec 04 93,38,319 doses

NATIONWIDE	DEC 03	DEC 04
Fresh cases	9,765	8,603
Recoveries	8,548	8,190
Deaths	477	415

KARNATAKA	DEC 03	DEC 04
Fresh cases	413	397
Recoveries	256	277
Deaths	4	4

Places with 3 or more cases to get cluster tag

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

AS Omicron, the new variant of the Covid19 virus, is suspected to spread fast, the state government is putting in place tough measures to contain it. The government has decided to declare any place with three or more Covid positive cases as a cluster, while earlier, it would be with only 10 or more cases.

"Everyone in such clusters will be tested and treated," Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai told the media on Saturday. As a number of cases are being reported from educational institutions and apartments in Bengaluru, only those with two doses of vaccine will be allowed to assemble at common areas in apartment complexes, while no outsider will be allowed, he said.

The chief minister said that testing is compulsory for the staff and students of hostels, while both doses of vaccine have been made mandatory for parents of students attending off-line classes. Testing is also a must for those with comorbidities. "Officials have been instructed to take foolproof measures," he added.

Bommai said they have received only a preliminary report on the two Omicron cases in Karnataka and the Health Department has been told to get a detailed report and the treatment protocol followed in various countries. CONTINUED ON: P4

'Omicron is Usain Bolt of Covid variants'

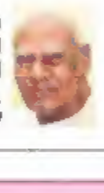
Omicron is different from all other Covid variants as it carries mutations from Alpha, Beta, Gamma and Delta in one bag. Omicron is like Usain Bolt among all the SARS-COV2 variants which can spread faster than the others, said Dr V Ravi, eminent virologist and nodal officer the INSACOG lab at NIMHANS. P4

All travellers from South Africa traced

Travellers who arrived in Karnataka from South Africa, but were untraceable till Friday evening, have now been found. BBMP Chief Commissioner Gaurav Gupta said all South African travellers and those from other high-risk countries, who had arrived in the city over the last two weeks, had been traced and their samples taken. P4

EXPRESS READ

Former AP CM K Rosaiah dies at 88



Hyderabad: Konijeti Rosaiah, the veteran Congress politician who had served as CM of undivided Andhra Pradesh and governor of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, died on Saturday. He was 88 | P7

CM opposes Kasturirangan report

Bengaluru: CM Basvaraj Bommai on Saturday told the Centre not to implement the Kasturirangan report on Western Ghats. "Declaring Western Ghats as an ecologically sensitive zone would adversely affect the livelihood of the people there," he said. P3

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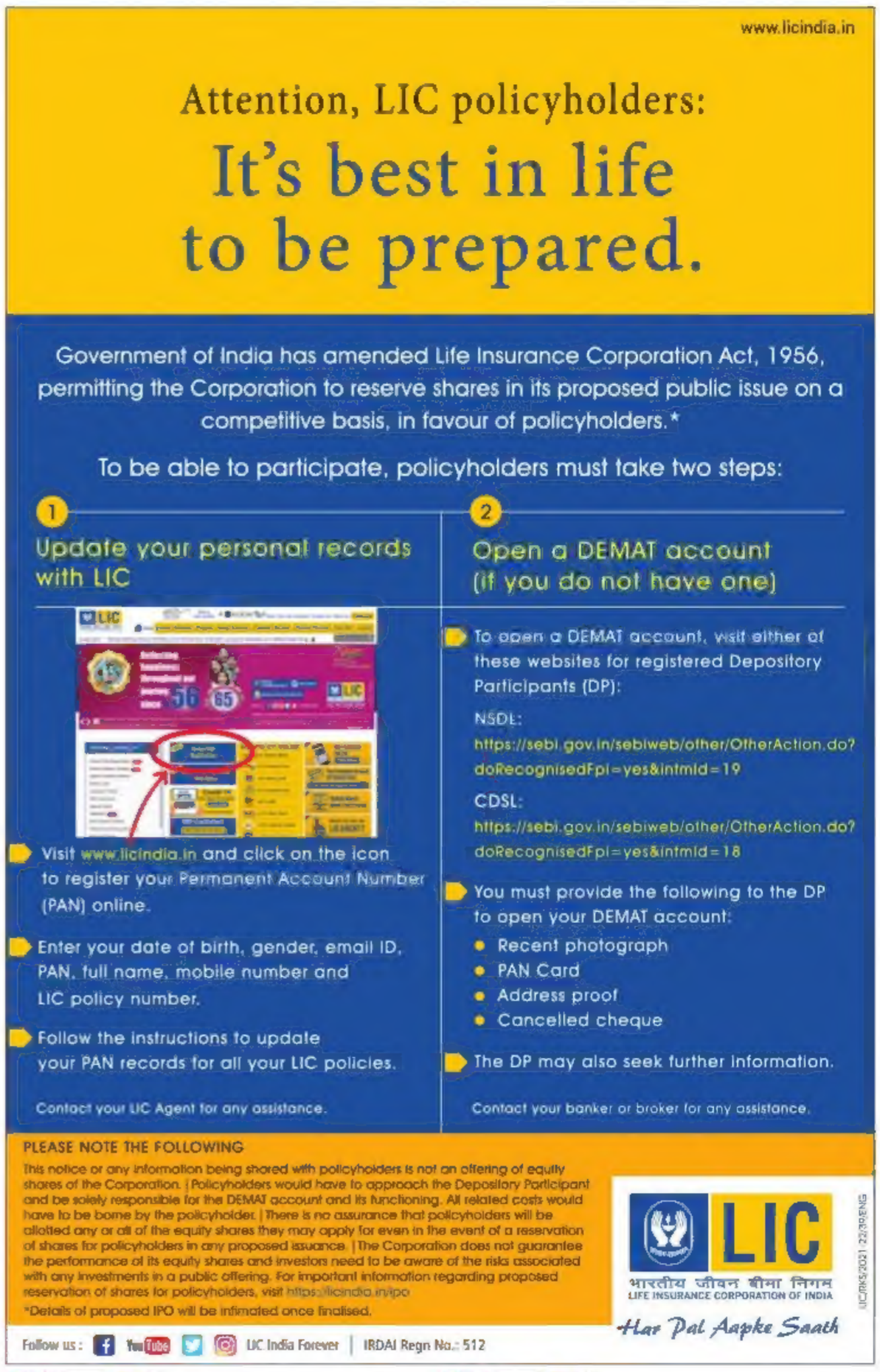
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